



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

PRESS RELEASE

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CHANDLER GANG MEMBER SENTENCED TO 100 MONTHS PRISON FOR POSSESSION OF SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA –Paul K. Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona, and Virginia O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, announced that on September 25, 2003, Noel F. Wickey, DOB 07/30/75, of Laveen, Arizona, was sentenced to 100 months prison by United States District Court Judge Mary H. Murgia, in Phoenix, Arizona.

On June 11, 2003, Noel F. Wickey pled guilty to possession of an Unregistered Sawed-off Shotgun in violation of 26 U.S.C. § 5861(d), and Felon in Possession of a Firearm, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1). These are Wickey's fourth and fifth felony convictions, as he has three prior felony convictions for Aggravated Assault, Felony Flight, and Attempted 1st Degree Burglary.

The investigation and plea agreement that led to the convictions disclosed that Wickey, a "southside chandler" gang member, on September 7, 2001, at approximately 1:00 a.m., in the Gila River housing area, was a passenger in a moving car when he fired his sawed-off shotgun into the air near individuals whom he had an ongoing dispute with. Gila River Police Department Officers responded to the gunshot, but Wickey and his driver had already left the area. The Officers took statements and staked out the residential

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neighborhood to see if the then unknown shooter and driver would return. Shortly thereafter, Wickey and the driver returned in the same car and turned off their headlights as they proceeded to drive into the housing area. Gila River Police Officers then stopped the car, arrested Wickey and the driver, and seized Wickey's loaded sawed-off shotgun.

This prosecution is the most recent success for the District of Arizona's Project Safe Neighborhood's firearms enforcement program. The effectiveness of Project Safe Neighborhoods in Arizona is based on the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to cooperate in a unified offensive that is led by United States Attorney Paul K. Charlton. Through the ongoing partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement like the one in this case, the United States Attorney is implementing a series of strategies that are contoured to fit the specific gun crime problems throughout Arizona. The ultimate goal of Project Safe Neighborhoods is to create safer neighborhoods by reducing gun violence and sustaining the reductions. Prosecutions such as this one are clearly a strong step in that direction.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Gila River Police Department. The prosecution was conducted by Special Assistant United States Attorney Michael Lee, of the United States Attorney's Office, District of Arizona.

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